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The Carved Shoes

And Other Holland Tales

By

Violet Moore Higgins

Story Time Tales

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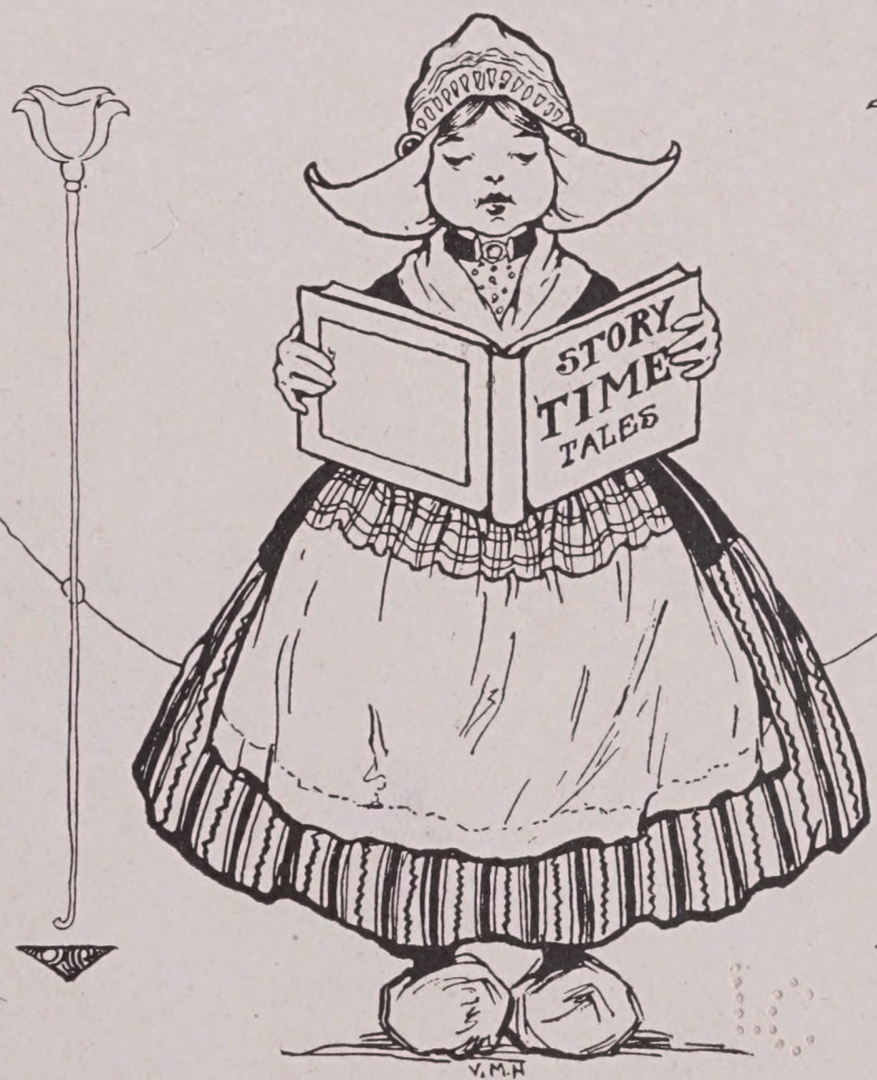
DIRK DISCOVERS EDA'S MESSAGE

THE CARVED SHOES

And Other Holland Tales

STORIES AND PICTURES BY
Violet Moore Higgins
AUTHOR OF "THE ENDLESS STORY," "THE LOST GIANT", ETC.



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DEDICATION

TO MY COUSINS AND
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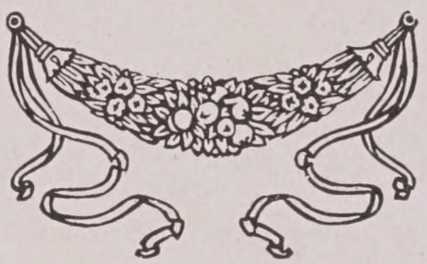


INTRODUCTION

FAIRY TALES and legends have come down to us from nearly every country on the globe, and so it is surprising to find how few of these legends are woven about the interesting little country called Holland, or The Netherlands. After a little thought, however, the reason becomes clear.

Holland is a strange country. The greater part of it lies below the level of the sea, which is kept back by means of great earthen walls or dykes. The low swampy land thus enclosed has been drained by hundreds of windmills pumping the sea water into the many canals that cross the country in every direction.

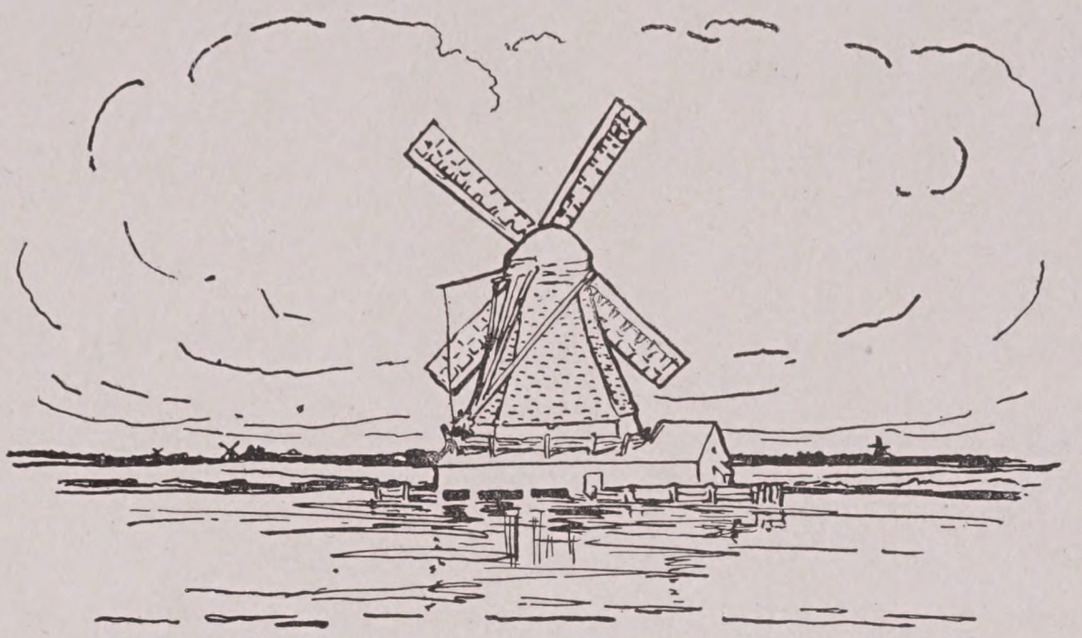
To keep their country free from enemies, great and small, the greatest being the sea itself, and to raise crops on the reclaimed marshes, the Hollanders have always had to work very hard, through long days and often into

the night. Many a time at midnight the men and women of a village have been aroused by the loud tolling of a warning bell, and have hurried out to mend the dyke and save Holland from the sea. Indeed the most famous Dutch story that has been handed down to us is that of the hero of Haarlem, the little boy who thrust his hand into a hole in the dyke and held it there until men came to mend the break.

So you see Hollanders have little time either to tell stories or to listen to them. But sometimes in the winter evenings, when families are gathered about their hearths or around the porcelain stoves, and the men and boys are carving or mending nets, while the women and girls, even the smallest, are knitting heavy woolen socks, the grandmother, her fingers flying and the needles flashing as she talks, may tell some tale of Holland.

So, let us pretend we are sitting in some cozy Dutch cottage beside the sea, the wind and the waves roaring outside, the fire crackling cheerily within, and a score of knitting needles clicking away, and that we are listening to an old, old Holland woman telling these stories of little Dutch boys and girls of long ago.

V. M. H.



The Carved Shoes

LONG years ago, there lived in the Dutch city of Leiden, a little boy and girl who were very fond of each other. The boy was named Doren Terlinder, and he was the only son of Leiden's richest merchant, Mynheer Nicolas Terlinder. The little girl, however, was very poor, the daughter of a woodcarver, and was named Anneke Vedder.

Doren Terlinder lived in a very

splendid house, with a high roof of bright colored tiles. There was a walled garden stretching away at the back toward a fine stable full of sleighs and blooded horses to pull them about. It was a magnificent sight when Mynheer Terlinder and his family drove through the streets of Leiden, the silver harness rattling, and the coachman cracking his long whip.

Little Anneke did not live far from Doren's splendid home, indeed the rear of her house was separated from the Terlinder stables only by a narrow alley or lane, but for the difference in the two homes, it might well have been across the world. It was only a tiny two-room hut, tacked onto a great warehouse. It was shabby too, patched here and

there with all sorts of odds and ends, and if it had ever been painted, the weather had long since worn the paint away, and turned the walls a dull gray.

Doren's clothes were as splendid as his house, and he had many of them. According to the fashion of the time, he wore velvet suits, in rich dark shades, with collars and cuffs of soft white lace. His shoes, instead of the heavy wooden ones so common in his country, were of fine leather, with big silver buckles, and there were buckles at the knees of his baggy knickerbockers. For street wear, he added a long full cape, and a high-crowned, broad-brimmed felt hat, also with a big silver buckle on it.

Little Anneke on the contrary, had few clothes, and those few were worn

and shabby, patched in a dozen places and faded with much washing. In summer she wore no stockings, in order to save the heavy gray wool ones, knitted by her own small hands, and her feet were thrust into clumsy wooden shoes.

But in spite of all these differences, Doren and Anneke were friends. They had not always known each other. Indeed, Anneke was a little over nine, and Doren just ten when they met. It came about in a strange way.

Doren had many servants to wait on him, scores of beautiful toys to play with, a tutor who came every morning to give him his lessons, and a mother who adored him. There was the lovely garden to frolic in, too, but it is hard to play alone, and Doren was very lone-

ly. He had no brothers and sisters, nor even any little cousins, and his father would not let him mingle with the boys and girls who played in the streets outside the garden, and whose laughter often floated over the high walls to him. So his dearest wish, the desire for a playmate, was the only thing the boy was denied.

One day—it was his tenth birthday, and it had been especially dull, in spite of a cake and many fine presents—he wandered listlessly down the garden path, and into the stables. At the back a small door stood open, and Doren could catch a glimpse of a narrow lane and buildings beyond. There was no one about for the moment, and so he quietly slipped through the little

door closing it gently behind him. Then he looked up and down the alley for a moment, undecided which way to go, when suddenly he caught the sound of singing. It came from a point almost directly opposite his own gate, and he ran toward the sound. A high wall interposed, but it was broken here and there, affording an excellent foothold. The next instant, flushed and breathless, Doren was perched on the top of the wall, looking down into a new world. In the tiny courtyard before a shabby little hut, a girl was kneading bread in a big bowl placed on a rickety bench, and she was singing as she worked. She had a round rosy face framed in a plain white cap, and Doren thought he had never seen anyone who looked so happy.

"Good morning," he said politely from his perch on the wall. The little girl started at his voice, looked up, and then gave him a smile that made her face shine like sunlight. "Greetings to you, stranger," she answered and went on with her work.

"My name is Doren," the boy said simply, "I'm coming down," and without hesitation he jumped down beside her. "What's your name?"

"Anneke," she replied, "and that's Jan, my father."

Doren looked around quickly, and discovered that a man was sitting on a bench near the door of the house. He was as shabby as the hut itself, and as busy as his little daughter. In his left hand he held a block of soft white

wood, and with a sharp knife he was carving wonderful designs upon it. He looked up for an instant, with a bright smile like Anneke's, then bent to his work. The little girl finished kneading the bread, covered it with a clean cloth, and set it aside to rise. Then she crossed to where Doren stood fascinated by Jan Vedder's skill with the knife.

"He is a great carver, the father," she said proudly. "He makes images of saints for the churches, and panels for homes of the rich, and all sorts of lovely things."

"He must make a great deal of money," Doren said with a new respect for Jan's talents. The man laughed, but sadly, and Anneke spoke up quickly.

"He would, if we had money enough

THE LITTLE GIRL SET THE BREAD ASIDE

to start his own shop, but now he works for a master carver, and gets but a mere handful." Her childish voice was full of anger and tears. Then suddenly she darted into the hut, and came out again carrying a wooden doll. "See," she cried, "father carved that for my last birthday. It shows that he is a master carver."

It was indeed a wonderful doll, with cleverly jointed arms and legs, but like the little girl herself, it was dressed in patches and faded garments.

"And see these," Anneke went on, pointing to a pair of small wooden ornaments on either side of her cap. Rich Dutch children wore silver and gold fasteners there, but none could have been lovelier than the wooden rosebuds which held Anneke's

plain cap in place. A scroll ran around the flowers and there were words on it. "What does it say?" Doren asked.

Anneke's cheeks flushed a deeper red, and she drew off her cap and held it out to him. "I—I cannot read," she said in a low voice.

"Cannot read," echoed Doren in amazement—"why—why—"

"We are not rich like you, young master," the man spoke up gently, "and I cannot afford to send my little Anneke to the school. Then I must needs keep busy carving all the day, and into the night sometimes, to earn our bare living, so I have no time to teach her myself."

Doren stood silent for a moment, turning over in his mind this strange

fact. He did not particularly enjoy his lessons to be sure—he was a real boy, but not to be able to read—oh, that would not do at all. A great idea slowly shaped itself, and suddenly he brought it out in a rush of words.

"I want to learn to carve," he cried. "I will pay you gold to teach me—and then I'll teach Anneke reading, myself."

Jan Vedder looked up, and let his work drop in his apron, in sheer amazement. "But you are rich, young master," he cried . "You do not need to work."

"I want to—it is beautiful—I shall love to do it," the boy persisted. "I will give you gold—"

"But your parents," Jan objected.

"Mother will say I may," Doran laughed. "I'll go ask her now, and tomorrow I'll come for my first lesson," and he ran to the wall, climbed it nimbly, gave them a last wave of the hand, and was gone.

Mevrouw Terlinder had never seen her little son so gay and animated as when he burst into her room, and proffered his strange request. He told the whole story, keeping back just one detail. He said not a word about Anneke, for he felt sure that his mother would say he must ask father's permission. If Mynheer Terlinder did not want his son to play with the well dressed children in their own row, what would he say to Anneke, in her patched and faded dress?

"You must ask your father," Mevrouw

said when he had finished. Doren did, that night at dinner. It had been a good day for the merchant. Several ships had returned with rich cargoes, and one that was believed lost had come in, besides, it was the boy's birthday, so after a few moments, Mynheer laughed genially and gave his consent.

"After all, why not?" he said. "It hurts no one to have a skilled hand. But mind—don't cut any fingers off."

So the matter was settled. Each afternoon Doren appeared in the little courtyard, and for more than an hour, patient Jan Vedder showed him how to hold the knife and the block of wood, and for another hour the boy and girl sat bent over a first reader, he pointing out the strange characters, and she wrinkling her

brows and repeating them after him. It was early spring when the lessons began. If the weather was fine, they all sat in the courtyard, but when it rained, they huddled about the tiny charcoal stove in the hut.

Though all the furnishings were worn and old, everything was scrupulously clean, a proof of Anneke's ability as a housekeeper, and he grew to feel entirely at home in the place. He was making surprising progress as a wood carver. Jan was delighted. The boy was a real artist. At first his teacher had traced all the designs onto the wood for him, but as his hand grew more skillful, Doren began to work out little ideas of his own, and it was a proud moment for him when he presented his mother with a

THE BOY WAS A REAL ARTIST

pair of candle sticks, entirely his own work and design.

Anneke was making progress too. She had soon gone through the first reader and was well into the second, when suddenly all the joy was ended abruptly. Mynheer Terlinder took it into his head one day to visit the carving lesson, quite unannounced. Unfortunately he came a little late, and found his son, who would one day be the richest man in Leiden, sitting on the doorstep of a hovel, his head bent over a book, and close beside him a "ragged little beggar child," to use his own harsh words.

The next few moments were hard for everyone but Mynheer Terlinder. Jan Vedder heard himself called a worthless rogue and threatened with all sorts of calami-

ties, and though his face grew pale, he dared not answer, and Anneke crouched against his shoulder, crying and trembling with fear. Finally when he had spent his wrath somewhat, Mynheer Terlinder marched off, dragging Doren along with him, and the boy was sobbing too.

Three days passed, and Doren was so pale and silent that his father began to be alarmed, and to repent somewhat of his haste. The third evening he came home full of a great plan to amuse the boy. A traveling showman had brought a dancing bear to Leiden. He was to dance in the public square that night. There were seats built for the rich, close around the bear, the poor people must stand at a distance, and crane their necks for a view. Mynheer Terlinder had bought

three of the most expensive seats and proposed to take Mevrouw and Doren. Even that prospect did not seem to make the boy happy. He permitted himself to be made ready, but there was no enthusiasm in his manner. Nor did the bear's antics serve to cheer him. He was glum and silent through it all and as they started to force their way through the crowd to the Terlinder carriage, he had not a word to say.

It was a very dark night, and except for the brightly lighted square the streets of Leiden were in deep gloom. The carriage stood at some little distance away, around a corner, and the three walked slowly toward it, picking their way carefully over the rough cobblestones of the pavement. Suddenly Doren felt his arms

grasped roughly from behind, but before he could cry out a heavy cloth was flung over his head and shoulders, so that it muffled him completely, and he felt himself hurried rapidly along, in some unknown direction. Presently he was pushed into a carriage, and his captors followed. Doren knew by the different cushions and the absence of a floor carpet that this was not the Terlinder carriage, and he felt more curiosity than fear as to where he was being taken. When the cloth had been taken off his head he realized that there were two men with him, but it was too dark in the coach to discern their faces, and even if the curtains had not been tightly drawn, it was too dark in the streets to tell directions.

They came to a halt at last, the muffler

was wound around his head once more, and the boy felt himself being led down a stone paved lane, and up a short flight of stairs. A key turned in a lock, someone struck a light, and the muffler was removed once more. Doren gave a quick glance at his captors. He felt sure they were not Hollanders, doubtless some of the foreigners who lived along the water front. They were heavy set, dark men. One of them had silver ear rings gleaming among his black curls, and the other had a dagger and a silver mounted pistol shoved into his girdle. He seemed the leader, for he gave a short, sharp order to the other. "Get the clothes," and then turning to Doren he added, "Take off your things—all of them."

The boy obeyed. There was something in

the hard dark face that made him fear to refuse. He pulled off his velvet suit, then his fine linen under-garments, and dressed himself in the ragged and patched suit which was given him instead. Even his leather shoes were exchanged for heavy wooden ones. Then followed a long journey in the coach, just how long Doren did not know, for he fell asleep at last from sheer exhaustion, and was only awakened by a rude shake at his shoulder and a gruff order to get out.

Again he was hustled up a stairway, a circular one this time, thrust into a dark room, and heard the key click in the lock. He felt blindly about in the dark, and presently found a sort of rough bunk built against the wall. He dropped into it wearily, and fell sound asleep at once. Not long

before daylight the upper half of his door was opened, and a small basket of food dropped in. Then Doren heard footsteps descend the winding stone stairs, a door slammed and there was a scraping sound of wheels, which gradually grew fainter and fainter and at last died away altogether. Then he became aware of the strangest crunching and groaning of timbers over his head, and tried to imagine what it could be. As daylight began to appear, objects in his prison became more distinct, and Doren looked around with interest. The room was empty, save for a low stool, a small table, and the bunk built against the wall. The door was divided into halves, so that the upper part could be opened separately, but now both sections were securely

locked. At the opposite side was a casement window, set rather high in the wall. Doren dragged the stool close to it, climbed up, and with some difficulty persuaded the rusty old hinges to turn. When the window swung open at last, and he had thrust his head outside, he knew at last what had caused the creaking sound that had so puzzled him.

He was high up in the tower of a very large windmill, whose fan-like arms were turning around and around in the breeze from the distant sea. Far below was a wide canal, winding like a silver ribbon through the soft green fields. Not a sign of Leiden could be seen. Either it was too far away, or in the opposite direction, but a little way below him on the canal Doren could see a small village, red

roofed, with a neat white church in the middle, standing on guard like a shepherd among his flock. Little boats were plying up and down the canal, and people were moving here and there along its banks, so that for awhile Doren was very much interested. Presently, however, he began to wonder what time it was. The big silver watch which had been one of his birthday gifts, had gone with his clothes, and he could only guess by the sun. It must be about seven o'clock, he thought. He put the basket on the table, drew up the stool and ate and drank hungrily from the loaf of coarse bread, the hunk of cheese, and the bottle of water he found in the basket. Then he looked out of the window again at the canal, but presently he grew weary of that. How

ANNEKE WASHING CLOTHES IN THE CANAL

long would he have to stay here, he wondered. And what could he do with the time?

Idly his fingers began to search his pockets, first those in the wide patched trousers, then the shabby old coat, then the vest. They were all empty. He sighed. Even a piece of string would have been something to play with. Suddenly his fingers found something hard, but with a layer of cloth between. Clearly, something had worked its way into the lining of the vest and had been forgotten. For some time Doren worked away at the hidden object, then he drew it out to the light with one last triumphant tug. At sight of his find, he gave a cry, then quickly clapped his hand over his mouth, but he need not have feared, for no

one could overhear him at that great height.

In the boy's hand lay a jack knife, with three good sharp blades, and suddenly he caught it close to him, buried his head in his arms, and shed the first tears since his capture. When the storm of tears had passed, he lifted his head and there was a new light in his eyes. Seating himself cross-legged on the table, in the direct range of the good light from the window, he lifted the stool to his lap, turned it upside down and began to carve one of its legs, a little smile curling his lips as he worked.

In Leiden meanwhile, many things had happened. Mynheer Terlinder had not missed the boy until they had reached the carriage door. Poor Mevrouw fell in

a heap on the stones when she realized that he was gone, and Mynheer and the coachman lifted her into the carriage, and she was driven rapidly toward home. She went alone, however, for Mynheer himself had started on foot to the headquarters of the military guards. He knew exactly what had happened, and he knew too, exactly what he meant to do. In a few moments he had told his story, and with a lantern boy running ahead, and two tall soldiers beside him, was hurrying toward the street of warehouses, across the lane from his own home.

So it came about that Jan Vedder was awakened from sleep at the end of a hard day's work by a fearful pounding at the door, and voices crying, "Open in the King's name." He obeyed with-

out fear, for he was brave, and his conscience was clear. The next instant he found his wrists fettered, and a soldier holding him roughly by either arm. Then he saw Mynheer Terlinder

"What does this mean?" he cried.

"You have stolen my son," the other replied sternly. "Now you are going to prison or you will tell us us where you have hidden him."

In vain Jan pleaded and protested his innocence, and little Anneke, who had been awakened, and stood beside her father, cried bitterly and declared hotly that he had never left the house that night, but the soldiers paid no attention. Had not Vedder been receiving gold from the young Master Doren and had not Mynheer Terlinder stopped the

lessons? Of course the woodcarver had stolen the boy for revenge, and was holding him for ransom.

Jan had but a moment for a parting word with Anneke. "You must go to your grandmother till I am free," he said, kissing her. "I will come"—and then they dragged him away, and she was left alone, huddled in a sobbing heap. She lay there until morning, but with the first dim light she began making her preparations. Her belongings were few—three or four pieces of extra clothing, the wooden doll, and a string of carved beads that Jan had made for Anneke's mother long years before. They made only a little bundle, with Jan's carving tools wrapped carefully in the very middle. Then cautiously she pried up a

loose tile on the hearthstone, and drew out a small leather bag. She opened it and counted the money. The rent had just been paid, so they would still have a home when father was free again, and there were seventeen small silver coins in the bag.

Anneke forced herself to eat a hasty breakfast, shoved the rest of the loaf into her bundle, drew the door to, and set out on her long trip to Zurtrect, the village where her grandmother lived. As she passed through the streets of Leiden, she saw on every wall handbills which said that Doren Terlinder, son of Mynheer Terlinder, had been stolen, and offering one thousand guilders for news leading to his recovery.

So a week passed and then another.

ANNEKE DREW OUT A SMALL LEATHER BAG

Doren began to wonder if he had been forgotten. How could he know of the big posters everywhere advertising the big reward which grew larger as the anxiety of Mynheer Terlinder increased?

Though the boy was lonely, he was so busy now that the days really seemed to pass very quickly. He had a new idea, and he was working it out. From his prison window he noted carefully every detail of the distant landscape, a church tower of a somewhat peculiar shape, a big house in the little village with the upper story painted bright blue, a small dock opposite the mill, with a big green boat always tied beside it. And day by day he worked at his plan. One morning, early, after his captors had driven away, and work in the mill below was going on,

Doren leaned far out of the window and peered anxiously in every direction as far as he could see.

Then he bent down, drew off his wooden shoes, and leaning out of his casement window once more, he hurled them, one at a time, as far as he could throw, into the canal beneath. They struck with a splash, sank, rose again, wabbled, righted themselves, and floated slowly down on the broad surface of the canal toward the little village in the distance. Doren watched them for a long time, until they were mere specks in the water, then he sighed, sharpened his knife on the rusty hinges of the window, and picking up the neglected stool, fell to work once more.

Far off in the village of Zurtrect, little

Anneke too was busy. She had received a warm welcome from her grandmother, who was poor and old, and daily growing more feeble. Anneke did all the housework, making her old grandmother spend long hours sitting in the sunshine, knitting socks. On Mondays she carried their few clothes to the canal, and there washed and rinsed them, afterward spreading them on the grassy banks to dry.

One day as she knelt on the ground, bent over her tub, she lifted her head a moment, and saw something floating on the surface of the water, then another something, two small strange objects. Anneke stared at them, then, her curiosity aroused, jumped into a boat nearby and rowed out into the canal.

They floated nearer and nearer, and at last Anneke leaned far over the gun-

wale and caught them up. They proved to be a pair of wooden shoes, but utterly unlike any that she had ever seen before, for they were covered from heel to toe with carving, a few crude pictures, a mill, a church, and long lines of letters and words. When the boat was tied securely once more, Anneke flung herself down in the grass beside her tub, and began to read what was carved on the wooden shoes.

A few moments later she came running toward the cottage, her face flushed, her eyes bright. "Grandmother—grandmother," she cried, "Father will be free now—everything's all right—but I must go to Leiden—now."

She set out on foot a few moments later, the precious shoes tied in a cloth, and

swung over her shoulder. Miles of the way she walked, on feet that grew hourly more and more weary and lame. Sometimes a friendly carter gave her a lift of a few miles, and once she had a boat ride on the canal. It was a strange, dusty little figure that finally presented itself at the Terlinder home, and fairly forced a way to where, in a great bed-chamber, the richest man in Leiden sat beside his wife's bedside, patting her thin hand, and trying to make his voice steady as he told her Doren would soon be found.

Silently Anneke laid the wooden shoes on the counterpane, and without a word pointed to the strange letters carved on them. Then she sank in a little heap to the floor, utterly exhausted.

As he read the carved words hope came back to Mynheer Terlinder, joy brought the color into Mevrouw's pale cheeks, and there was a great stir in the big house. Anneke was lifted tenderly and carried to a big cool clean bed, where she slept for hours, and woke at last to find her father sitting beside her, smiling and happy, the fetters gone from his wrists.

That night as Doren lay in his bunk, not yet asleep, he heard a sudden uproar below him, shouts, curses, a loud trampling of feet, the clink of chains and suddenly his door was burst open with a crash. Mynheer Terlinder stood on the threshold, tears running down his cheeks, his arms outstretched. Doren fairly flew to him, and clung

round his neck sobbing. When they were both calmer, the boy told his story, and showed the carved stool, now complete, and the start he had made on the table, as a means of passing the long days. When he heard how Anneke had been the means of finding him, his joy knew no bounds.

Once more Doren went over the circular stone stair, free now, his father beside him, carrying the carved stool. Down in the mill they found three men bound hand and foot and closely guarded, the two who had captured the boy, and the miller, who had helped to conceal him. Doren's return to his home was a triumphant procession, with a happy reunion at the end of it. He found his little friend Anneke there, in pretty

new clothes, radiant with happiness and he himself put into her hands a leather bag with five thousand guilders in it—the reward.

"It's all yours," Mynheer Terlinder said gently, as she hesitated, and then he went on in a strange voice, one that Doren never remembered hearing him use before, so low and humble it was, "And I am sorry for all I did to you—I ask your forgiveness."

Happy days were to follow now for Anneke and Doren and those who loved them. Jan Vedder realized a life's ambition at last. He became a master carver, with a shop full of workmen, and coffers that were full of gold. He spent the happy days, drawing beautiful designs for his men to work out, or

doing the most delicate bits of some specially fine piece.

Anneke and Doren studied together under the best tutors in Leiden, and Mynheer and Mevrouw Terlinder found the big house brighter for the girl's sunny presence in it.

Years after when Anneke and Doren were grown up and married, and old Mynheer Terlinder held his grandchildren on his knees, there was no story he loved so well to tell, or they to hear, as the tale of how their father carved the wooden shoes, and how their mother found them in the canal at Zurtrect. And the shoes themselves, greatly prized, stood ever in the place of honor on the shelf over the great fireplace.

EDA WAITING FOR DIRK TO RETURN WITH
MYNHEER KAPTAIN

The Feathered Messenger

ONCE upon a time, there lived in the old Dutch city of Amsterdam, beside the Zuyder Zee, a sea captain, named Heinrich Van Der Decken. Though he called Amsterdam "home" because that was where his little daughter Eda lived with her grandmother, and because his heart and thoughts were always

there, yet he spent fully nine or ten months out of each year on his good ship, the "Maria Marta," sailing to and from all the distant corners of the world. Like all the boats of that time, the "Maria Marta" was a sailing vessel. She would spread her snowy sails and skim lightly over the water like some great bird, and the captain would stand at her prow and watch the dear shores of Holland recede, and finally fade away in the distance. Somewhere on that vanished shore he knew that his old mother, Mevrouw Van Der Decken, with little Eda close beside her, was watching too, until the Maria Marta was only a speck on the waters, and murmuring prayers for a safe voyage and a swift return.

All his life Captain Van Der Decken had been a sailor, and in time had come to own many ships. The many voyages he had sailed had made him a wealthy man while still a young one, and when at thirty, he married Maria Marta Schrevvogel, the playmate of his childhood, he built for her a splendid house, three stories high, overlooking the water front and the docks. There was a big window high up in the very point of the gable, where his bride used often to sit and look across the Zuyder Zee, waiting for a first glimpse of the Maria Marta's sails.

The captain's house was one of the finest in Amsterdam. But sorrow came to it within two years, only for a little while did its mistress preside over it. She had died

when Eda was but a year old. The house and child had been turned over to the care of the captain's adoring mother.

Despite the loving devotion of her grandmother and of her father, on those days when he was home from his long journeys, despite the fact that her wishes and desires were law, the little girl remained sweet and unspoiled.

She was not very strong and so was not permitted to attend school. Instead, a teacher came to the house and his only other pupil was Dirk Tanckheere, the gardener's young son, and Eda's devoted companion.

The days were not all study and work, and part of the two children's play was watching the storks who had, year after year, each spring, made their home on top of the stable roof.

There they had lived for years, going south as winter came on and heralding the spring with their return.

The spring when Eda was ten and Dirk thirteen, there was one stork unlike all the rest in the nest of birds. A black collar around his neck and one of his wings was also black. He was easily recognized by the children thereafter, as the young storks having learned to fly, clouded the sky at all times of the day. They felt as if he belonged especially to them and Eda named him Mynheer Kaptain in honor of her father.

One day, Eda and Dirk, hearing the dear, familiar rustle of wings, came forth to greet their feathered friends.

But great was their dismay when they noted that Mynheer Kaptain was not among them.

"He's been shot—I know he's been killed," cried Eda and she began to sob as if her heart would break.

"Don't—please don't," said Dirk to her. "I'll find him." His face was white and tense and without another word he set forth in search of their friend.

Late afternoon, he returned bringing Mynheer Kaptain, one wing filled with shot, with him. Only through a seeming miracle had he found him.

Mynheer Kaptain's wing healed splendidly. Dirk had been a good surgeon. But very soon it was evident that it would be a long time before he would fly again, perhaps he never would. The big bird would flutter about on the grass in the garden with Dirk and Eda watching him from the summer-house, and the

stork family would sail around and around him, high overhead. There came at last a day when the feathered family formed a long line and headed due south with Mr. Stork at their head, and the others trailing after, but there were only seven in the line instead of eight. Mynheer Kaptain still could not fly.

When the cold weather came in earnest, Dirk built a box nest, filled it with straw and sticks, then nailed it to the wall close behind the big porcelain stove in the Janckheere rooms above the stables. During the day the big bird would stalk around the coachman's house, soon coming to feel feel quite at home there, and at night Dirk would lift him gently into his box and cover him with a bit of wool blanket.

He was even allowed the freedom of the big house, at Eda's demand, for she had grown very fond of the strange pet. He was becoming more tame all the time, and learned to come at once on hearing a certain peculiar whistle that Dirk made up for him, and would even eat sugar and cake from Eda's fingers quite as a dove might have done.

So winter passed, and gradually the days began to grow warmer. Then one morning, as old Mevrouw Van Der Decken sat sewing in the gable room, often lifting her eyes between stitches to peer out across the Zuyder Zee, suddenly she gave a cry of joy, and flinging open a window at the back, overlooking the garden she called, "Eda—Dirk—the Maria Marta

is coming in." They dashed up the three flights and sat for an hour watching the captain's ship come in.

When he was home at last, and had been welcomed and feasted, Eda dragged him gaily to the garden, and told him all about the stork which had been named for him, and Dirk interrupted to tell how bravely Eda had helped dress the wing. The captain listened with glowing eyes, and when the story was finished, winked knowingly at Dirk. Then he drew from his pocket a fine gold chain and locket, and a small gold bracelet with a clasp.

"I meant this bracelet for you, Eda," he said, "but I suppose you'll be giving it to that wonderful bird for a collar."

It was a great idea. Eda was delighted, and Dirk caught up Mynheer Kaptain who was strutting about the garden and cocking his head at them now and then almost as if he knew he was being discussed. The boy held him up so that Eda might clasp the bracelet around his feathery neck. It fitted nicely, and the children decided it was most becoming, especially when the pale spring sunshine glinted on the gold.

That very day Mynheer Kaptain made a short flight off the ground. Dirk and Eda could scarcely believe their eyes. The next day he was at it again, and each day he rose a little higher until at last he could sail around the house top quite easily, and up to the old nest. But he would always come at

sound of the whistle Dirk had made up for him, and he was as tame as ever.

Then a week or so later there was another home-coming at the Van Der Decken home. Mr. and Mrs. Stork and their family came flying back from the south, and there were five strange birds with them. And what a twittering and a fluttering there was about the old nest then! How excited they all were at seeing their stay-at-home brother! Then there was the keenest interest in his gold collar, too, and everyone of them pecked inquisitively at it with his long sharp bill. On their winter travels the five young birds had selected mates—that explained the five strange birds—and soon they were all at work mak-

MYNHEER KAPTAIN WAS THE ONLY BACHELOR

ing new homes, one pair on the house roof, another on the stable, and three directly across the street, on the houses of neighbors. But Mynheer Kaptain, the only bachelor, made his home with his parents in the old nest.

It was a happy summer at the Van Der Decken home. Early in August the captain began to have long talks with his mother, and after each of these conversations the good lady would appear with tear-reddened eyes. Then one day Eda was summoned to one of these secret conferences.

"How would you like to go on a long cruise with me?" the captain asked as the little girl came into the room. "I want to see your cheeks get red and round as apples."

The child gave a run and skip of pure joy, and flung herself into his arms, her eyes shining like stars. "Oh, father!" she said–"just that."

So then we find Eda on her way to foreign ports, past Belgium and Spain and into the Mediterranean Sea. So months passed and for Eda they were filled with the joy and excitement of change and interest.

But one day a half dozen storks flew south high above her head. From that moment Eda grew more and more homesick.

It made the captain wretched to see his child sad, yet he could not turn back. Onward they went past the Gulf of Aden, beyond the Red Sea. Eda tried hard to be brave and overcome her homesickness.

So they arrived at Alexandria. At first she was so interested she forgot to be homesick, but only for a little while. Her cheeks grew less and less rosy and the food on her plate remained untouched. Pol Putzen, sailorman, her special favorite, was almost as worried as her father. She told him one day that she was sure their own storks were among the birds flying south overhead.

When the Maria Marta was moored at a coast town in Egypt, Pol Potzen asked for shore leave, and went early in the morning. At nightfall he had not returned, and the ship was forced to lay over for the night. It was noon of the following day when at last he made his appearance on board. The captain had been amazed at Pol's absence, for he was

EDA CAUGHT HIM UP IN HER ARMS

the best man in the crew and the longest in his service, and now, frowning angrily, he stood waiting on the deck, as Pol made his way up the gangplank, carrying a strange bundle. Eda had joined her father, eager to plead for Pol's forgiveness. The sailor was carefully unwinding the queer bundle, and at last he laid it gently on the deck. Eda and the captain gave a cry of amazement. It was Mynheer Kaptain!

His feet were tied together so he could not get away, and he began to flutter wildly as soon as his head was uncovered. But Eda had rushed to where he lay, caught him up in her arms, and was hugging and kissing him wildly, her face aglow with joy.

"You can put me in the hold now in

irons, sir," Pol was saying to the captain. "I saw the birds yesterday, and I planned to go ashore and snare one and bring it aboard for the little lady. And I did have one, too, a regular beauty—when I saw this fellow, and thought I recognized him. Then I followed him for miles. I thought I'd never get him—he was that crafty—but I did at last—well, I'm ready, sir."

Of course there was no punishment for Pol—indeed he was quite the hero of the ship. Someone found a strong fine chain, and fastened it around the stork's leg with an iron ring. Just at first it seemed to bother him a little, and he made several attempts to fly away to shore, but at last he settled down to a life on deck, and seemed as

tame and contented as he had been in the garden in Amsterdam.

Eda was completely cured of her homesickness, now. All day long she played on deck in the warm sunshine with Mynheer Kaptain. Her thin little arms and legs grew round and firm, her cheeks were as red as apples, and once more the voyage seemed like a long picnic. They reached the Gulf of Aden at last, unloaded their cargo and took on a new one and then began the long voyage home. By the time they had again reached Alexandria spring had come, and great flights of storks kept passing overhead, steering straight for the north.

Then Mynheer Kaptain began to grow restless. He twitched and pulled at his chain now—he would not eat—he was al-

most cross to Eda. At first she was quite hurt by his change of manner, then suddenly she realized that he too, was homesick, just as she had been. It was hard to lose him, he had been such a comfort, but they were homeward bound, and so Eda formed a plan.

She unclasped the gold locket and chain that hung about her neck, hurried to her cabin, and was very busy with pencil and paper for several minutes. Then she went to the captain and told him of her decision. He was surprised, yet somehow, greatly pleased, at the little girl's unselfish kindness to the homesick stork. Together they wound the chain and locket tightly about his gold collar, and fastened it with a bit of string. Then Pol Putzen filed away

the iron ring that held the chain to the stork's leg, and Mynheer Kaptain was free.

He did not seem to realize it all at once, but stalked about the deck looking up whenever a flight of his fellows passed overhead. Then suddenly he spread his great wings, and sailed straight up, high above the ship, and he too, headed straight for home and Holland. Eda and her father and the sailors watched him until he was only a speck in the distance, then the men went back to work, but now they often sang as they scrubbed the decks or hauled at the ropes, for they too were going home.

Dirk Janckherre was helping his father spade up the garden the day the storks came home. It had been a long and

lonely winter for him as it had been for mevrouw, and the return of the dear familiar birds was a great event, promising, somehow, that the Maria Marta was also on her homeward way. With a radiant face he stood watching them as they circled about their nests. Mynheer Kaptain was not with them, but Dirk knew he would come. He had never been able to fly as rapidly as the other birds, since the injury to his wing, and when they had gone south in the fall, he had been at the tail end of the line.

It was several days later before he came straggling wearily in. Dirk had been watching for him, and when he appeared at last, the boy gave the queer low whistle. The next moment Mynheer Kaptain flut-

tered down into the garden and Dirk had his face buried in the soft feathers. Presently the hand that was stroking the smooth neck, felt something strange around the gold collar. Dirk was intensely excited when he discovered the locket, and holding the stork tightly in his arms he called loudly for mevrouw, for Jan, for Kirsten.

With all the household standing around watching eagerly, Dirk cut the string with his penknife, and untwisted the chain. Then he released the bird gently, and with trembling fingers opened the locket. There was a tiny strip of folded paper in it, and when it was spread out, they read over each other's shoulders, in Eda's round childish writing:

"Dear Grandmother: Mynheer Kaptain

has been with me all winter. I was very homesick until he came. Now he is homesick, too, so I am letting him go. But we are coming home soon. I send my love to Dirk. Tell him I miss him very much. Your loving granddaughter, Eda."

Then came the day, soon after, when the great ship came slowly up the harbor. Two figures stood high on the bridge, a tall bearded man and a little girl in a scarlet coat., They were Mynheer Kaptain and Eda, returned at last.

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